cution of electrification projects leading to considerable cost escalation and resultant increase in the cost of electrification; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Rajdhani Express between New Delhi and Madras

*151. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:
SHRI K. GOPALAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a Superfast Rajdhani Express between New Delhi and Madras and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) Unlike Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Bombay route, Delhi-Madras is too long to be covered by an overnight train.

Ills of Indian shipping industry

*152. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether delay by Government agencies in approving ship acquisition proposals, avoidable licensing control, lack of professional management among shipping companies and outdated fleet composition are responsible for the ills of the Indian Shipping industry; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to restore the shipping industry to normal health?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) World-wide recession in shipping is the main factor that has affected the Indian shipping companies.

The recent measures taken by the Government to revive shipping industry include providing financial assistance to viable shipping companies through rehabilitation proposals, helping shipping companies in getting increased share of Indian cargo, simplifying procedures for acquisition and scrapping of vessels, encouraging acquisition of specialised, modern fuel-efficient vessels etc. The guidelines framed by the Government with the help of Shipping Credit & Investment Company of India Limited for rehabilitation of viable Private Sector shipping companies include moratorium on repayment of loans, interest holiday for a limited period, rescheduling the repayments of loans etc. These measures would help the potentially viable shipping companies to overcome the adverse effects of the long global recession and lead to the creation of a stronger and financially viable shipping industry.

Programme to promote equality for women

*153. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:
SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch a pilot programme to promote equality for women in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal; and

(c) what are the names of the States where such a programme is likely to be launched in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT